

Integration Update

First in a series of informational articles to our beneficiaries

From COL Thomas Fitzpatrick, CAPT Michael Malanoski

Office of Integration

The integration of military medical services is actively going forward in the National Capital Area (NCA). Spurred on by last year's signing into law of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, NCA military medical services will integrate by 2011.

Advantages of Integration

Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) are presently located a mere 6.5 miles from each other and provide many duplicate services. Integration will help consolidate these services at a long-term cost savings by combining two facilities currently operating at less than full capacity into one fully utilized, world-class military healthcare complex.

Merging the two medical centers will also help to better leverage both graduate education and the training capabilities of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) on the same campus. The integration will also help maximize research opportunities with the National Institutes of Health, offering a unique and fully integrated military platform for healthcare, education, and research.

Though the number of patients currently serviced at military treatment facilities in the NCA will remain the same, these changes will help to improve access for our beneficiaries – particularly those in the rapidly growing Northern Virginia area who will gain a conveniently located, large brand new community hospital at Fort Belvoir. In addition, same day surgery centers will be located at Malcolm Grow Medical Center and Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center at Fort Meade. The joint staff of these hospitals will bring Army, Navy, and Air Force medicine together to give their best to the sick and wounded.

The Office of Integration

NCA leadership established the Office of Integration (OI) in December 2005. Two senior active-duty physician executives, one from NNMC and one from WRAMC, head the Office. The primary mission of OI is to oversee the merger of WRAMC and NNMC into one unified national military medical center housed at the Bethesda campus. The merged facility will be called Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

OI coordinates recommendations from a network of groups that represent the needs of beneficiaries in the integration process. These working groups are made up of more than 1,200 staff members who represent hundreds more coworkers within the military medical family of the NCA. They are working together to develop a world-class healthcare system for you, the military beneficiary.

While the merger of WRAMC and NNMC is a large piece of integration in the NCA, it is not the only piece and ultimately integration will impact all area Military Treatment

Facilities (MTF's). The OI is working closely with MTF commanders as discussions go forward on space requirements, manpower projections, and equipment needs. The guiding principle is a comprehensive shared vision by military medical leadership for a world-class healthcare system throughout the NCA.

Keeping you informed

We realize how important it is to keep you informed as things progress. The triangular “branding-image” you see here identifies information from the Office of Integration. Look for this image in your installation newspapers, on MTF public web sites, and on signage. When you see it, you will know there is an update on the integration process that may affect you and your medical services.

Although integration is a complex undertaking, it is important to remember that the final product will be the “best of the best” that Army, Navy and Air Force military medicine has to offer. This endeavor is one from which you, as the military patient, will ultimately benefit.